

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MUNICH 01097 120322Z

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FM AMCONSUL MUNICH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, NATO, MBFR, GW

SUBJECT: SCHMIDT AND LEBER PRESENT FRG'S VIEWS ON MILITARY
SITUATION IN EUROPE

1. SUMMARY: CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND MINDEF LEBER ADDRESSED
MAY 8-9 SPD CONFERENCE ON SECURITY POLICY IN MUNICH. SCHMIDT
WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT SATISFACTORY MBFR AGREEMENT WOULD BE
ACHIEVED IN DUE COURSE, AND WELCOMED FRANCE'S DECISION TO
STRENGTHEN HER LAND FORCES. LEBER BELITTLED IDEA OF INDEPEN-
DENT EUROPEAN DEFENSE AND STRESSED GREAT RECENT QUALITATIVE
IMPROVEENT IN BUNDESWEHR. BOTH UNDERLINED OVERRIDING IM-
PORTANCE OF US TO SECURITY OF FRG AND WESTERN EUROPE. END
SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 MUNICH 01097 120322Z

2. ROLE OF U.S. - SCHMIDT AND LEBER TOLD CONFEREES, WHO INCLUDED SPD MEMBERS OF BUNESTAG DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND SPD ADHERENTS IN BUNDESWEHR AND MOD, THERE COULD BE NO RPT NO DOUBT OF CONTINUING US COMMITMENT TO ATLANTIC ALLIANCE OR US WILL TO DEFEND EUROPE. THEY ALSO CLAIMED THAT BUNDESWEHR HAD MADE GREAT QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENTS UNDER SPD/FDP COALITION.

3. FR AND FRANCE - SCHMIDT WELCOMED PRESIDENT GISCARD'S INTENTION TO BRING FRENCH LAND FORCES UP TO STRENGTH COMPARABLE TO THOSE OF FRG. SCHMIDT SAW NO RPT NO THREAT IN GISCARD'S DECISION AND DECLARED THAT FRG MUST AVOID BEING PUSHED INTO PLAYING THE LEADING MILITARY ROLE IN EUROPE.

4. MBFR AND SOVIET THREAT - LEBER DREW DISTINCTION BETWEEN MILITARY POTENTIAL OF USSR AND ALLIES, WHICH HAS NOT RPT NOT DIMINISHED, AND THE POSSIBLE GROUNDS FOR EAST-WEST CONFLICT, WHICH HAVE. SCHMIDT SAW NEED TO BE CAREFUL OF POSSIBLE SOVIET EXPANSION INTO "UNCOMMITTED AREAS," AND POINTED TO EXPANSIONIST RUSSIAN TENDENCIES EXISTING SINCE CZARIST TIMES. HE THOUGHT SOVIETS MIGHT NOT RPT NOT BE ABLE TO CONTINUE BUILDUP OF NAVAL AND CONVENTIONAL LAND FORCES FOR TOO LONG BECAUSE CONTINUED DIVERSION OF RESOURCES FROM EFFORTS TO IMPROVE LIVING STANDARDS OF POPULATION COULD BE DANGEROUS. LEBER DECLARED THAT DETERRENCE WAS "FUNCTIONING" AND THAT THE MILITARY BALANCE IN CENTRAL EUROPE WAS INTACT.

5. INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN DEFENSE - LEBER RIDICULED THE "POLITICAL DAYDREAMS" OF AN INDEPENDENT WESTERN EUROPEAN DEFENSE. "EITHER OUR DEFENSE SYSTEM IS RELIABLE, IN WHICH CASE IT CANNOT RPT NOT BE PURELY EUROPEAN, OR IT IS PURELY EUROPEAN, IN WHICH CASE IT CANNOT RPT NOT BE SECURE," SAID LEBER. BETTS

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